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ABSTRACT

A discussion of multicultural education in elementary and secondary schools gives an overview of principles, considerations, and methods in implementing multicultural school programs, and offers sample lesson plans. The first section examines the origins of multicultural education and outlines four types of curricula: (1) focusing on discrete contributions of various cultures to the mainstream culture; (2) addition of a unit or course on a particular ethnic group without other changes to the basic curriculum; (3) infusion of different perspectives and content, representing change in the basic curriculum; and (4) all of the above, with the added feature that students are encouraged to make decisions and take action related to the concept or issue discussed. Common questions and concerns about multicultural program implementation are answered, and a list of indicators of how the school environment reflects a truly multicultural approach is presented. With this list, school staffs can assess the areas in which they could improve performance. Basic categories of indicators include language role, discipline, community role, testing, staffing, family participation, curriculum design and content, instructional materials and library collections, classroom practice, and instructional grouping. Four sample multicultural lesson plans, and several lists of references are included. (MSE)

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: STRATEGIES FOR LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS

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INTRODUCTION

> We were reading three books and they all dealt with houses. We were reading Vladimir Nabakov's *Speak Memory*, Isaak Dinesen's *Out of Africa*, and Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*. When we got to the third book I was terribly confused and I couldn't make sense of what they were talking about. So I thought, it must be because I am not smart enough. So I'll just go to class and I won't say anything. Maybe no one will notice that I am not as smart as they are. But then it suddenly occurred to me when they started talking about the attic that they weren't talking about my house. We didn't have an attic in our house. You don't usually have an attic when you live in a third floor front. Then I thought about the basement. I thought nobody went there but the landlord, and only if he had to. There were wild things that grew and prowled in the basement. Nobody wanted to go in there. And then I realized—Nabakov's house wasn't mine. Isaak Dinesen's house wasn't mine. Then I thought about all the books I ever had, all the way back to Dick and Jane and Sally and Spot. We never talked about my house. It was a horrific moment. My temperature changed. I remember going home and getting so frightened that at that moment I think I could have given up my education. I felt I don't belong here.
>
> *Sandra Cisneros (April 17, 1993, excerpt from speech at TESOL Convention, Atlanta, Georgia), author of* "House on Mango Street," "Woman Hollering Creek," *and* "My Wicked, Wicked Ways."

Luckily Sandra Cisneros did not give up her education. Instead, she decided to write the book that had been missing all through her school life: a book about *her* home and *her* family. A book that would feel like home to many students who did not live with Dick and Jane. A book about a house on Mango Street.

But, for every Sandra Cisneros, thousands of other potential poets and leaders drop out each year. Thousands of students who, because they see nothing familiar in the curriculum or school environment, begin to believe that they are not smart. They feel, "I don't belong here." This sense of alienation from school is reflected in the higher drop out rates and lower test scores for language minority students. Schools are failing their students.

Multicultural education seeks to reverse that trend. The aim of multicultural education is to ensure equity in education for all students and to help empower young people to make the world a better place both individually and collectively (Bigelow, 1993). As leading multicultural theorist, James Banks, explains, "multicultural education, as its major architects have conceived it during the last decade, is not an ethnic- or gender-specific movement. It is a movement designed to empower all students to become knowledgeable, caring, and active citizens in a deeply troubled and ethnically polarized nation and world" (Banks 1993).

This program guide will share strategies that teachers in linguistically diverse schools and classrooms can use to create a successful environment for all students.

The Origins of Multicultural Education

Many popular journals cite America's new and growing multicultural population as the impetus for the move towards multicultural education. But, of course, the population of the United States has always been multicultural. Think of all the peoples from Senegal, Ghana, the Congo, China, Japan, England, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Germany, Mexico, and the Caribbean, as well as Iroquois, Apache, Hopi, Cherokee, and more who make up the population of this country.

What *is* new is the national commitment to seek equity for all people within this pluralistic society. The civil rights and women's movements of the 1950s and 60s pushed the country in this new direction. In addition to political and economic equity, the demand was raised for the right to cultural integrity. The image of the melting pot, all cultures blending into the image of the dominant culture, was replaced by the societal salad or mosaic.

Education became a central focus of the Civil Rights Movement. If blacks and Latinos were to have an equal opportunity in politics and employment, then they had to be afforded an equal education. But schools were literally failing Latino and African American students. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, the lower test scores and higher drop out rates among certain races, ethnic groups, and women were attributed to "racial" or "cultural" differences. For example, in the early 1900s, persons of eastern and southern European origins and blacks were considered to have lower IQs. (Suzuki, 1984; Fairtest, 1991). Women were considered to have lower aptitudes in math. Black and Latino families were said to place a low value on education.

The Civil Rights Movement shifted the blame from the students to the system of schooling. If women or blacks had lower test scores, then schools were failing, not students. As a public institution central to our democracy, schools needed to change. First came the admission that separate was not equal and that there was a need for integration. Other aspects of schools came under scrutiny and are still in the process of revision. There was the recognition, for example, that:

- The school curriculum needs to reflect our full history, including the contributions and experiences of people of color and women. Thereby, all students can see themselves in history and students of all races can develop a greater respect and appreciation for each other.
- Testing and assessment need to be culturally and linguistically sensitive.
- Sorting or tracking systems should not segregate students within schools based on race or native language.
- School policy and pedagogy should promote cooperation among students of all races to prepare them for life in a pluralistic, multicultural, and global society.
- The native language of non-native English speakers and their parents should be treated as an asset, not a weakness.

The combination of these reforms came to be known as multicultural education. Just as there was much debate about the civil rights and women's movements, so is there much debate about multicultural education today. And just as there were many interpretations of the civil rights movement, so are there many interpretations of multicultural education.

Focus on Curriculum

Curriculum and classroom literature are the areas over which teachers have the most direct control. James Banks (Banks and McGee, 1989) outlines four levels of integration of ethnic content into the curriculum. This provides a helpful framework for teachers to use in their classrooms. Examine the four levels below and determine which most closely reflects your current practice. Then you can plan how to move specific lessons up to the next level. This is more fruitful if done with a partner and has proven to be an extremely useful exercise for departmental meetings, in-services, and peer coaching sessions.

Level 1—Contributions: Focus on heroes, holidays, food, and other discrete cultural elements. During special commemorative days (e.g., Cinco de Mayo, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Chinese New Year) teachers involve students in lessons and experiences related to the ethnic group being studied.

Level 2—Additive: Add a unit or course on a particular ethnic group without any change to the basic curriculum. For example, the teacher may add a unit on Native Americans or Haitians to the traditional social studies course.

Level 3—Transformation: Infuse various perspectives, frames of reference, and content material from various groups that extend students' understanding of the nature, development, and complexity of American society. The basic curriculum is changed. For example, the conquest of American territory is viewed from multiple perspectives, including those of Native Americans, African Americans, wealthy European settlers, and indentured servants from Europe.

Level 4—Decision Making and Social Action: This includes all of the elements of the Transformation approach (level 3) but also encourages students to make decisions and to take action related to the concept, issue, or problem they have studied in the unit. The goal at this level is to help students develop a vision of a better society and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to bring about constructive social change. It is at this level that students do more than identify social problems; they move to the higher level thinking skill of analysis. As high school social studies teacher and curriculum developer, Bill Bigelow, explains, "Multicultural education should be based on a problem solving approach, using inequity in this society as the core problem. The curriculum should pose the big 'why' questions: Why is there racism? Why is there sexism? What are the roots of social conflicts?" (Bigelow, 1993).

In practice, there is often overlap between Banks' four levels of integration. The emphasis in this publication is on strategies for facilitating multicultural integration at the transformation and decision making and social action levels (levels 3 and 4). For example, when studying the economy in the United States, students might examine the plight of unemployed factory workers or homeless people today. For their final project, they could be asked to take individual or small group actions to address the problems. Students should be asked to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the proposed actions. Action for the sake of action is not enough. Letter writing is probably one of the most common forms of "student action." There are times when letter writing is very effective but there are also times when the letters will not make a difference. They are simply an assignment. Students should begin with an analysis of the root cause of the problems. How can their actions get to these roots? What can they learn from historical movements for social change?

Questions and Answers About Implementing Multiculturalism

Teachers are always looking for ways to reach their students more effectively, especially when their classes include students with diverse backgrounds. However, they are also wary of techniques that create more work for them without producing clear benefits for their students. This section addresses some of the most common questions teachers have before they implement multicultural strategies in their classrooms.

Why do we have to add something else to the curriculum? I am already trying to teach too much!

Teaching about culture is not the addition of something new. We already teach about culture everyday by what we include or exclude from our curriculum. The goal is to make this aspect of the curriculum more complete, more accurate, and more sensitive. Stop and look at any classroom. Lessons about cultures fill the room (Lee, 1993). Here are some examples:

Classroom Example #1: The children's books feature light skinned children with rosy cheeks. A few books include an African American or Asian child. There is one book on the Mexican holiday, Cinco de Mayo. One wall is filled with portraits of famous people. All the famous people on this wall are white men who have made advances in science, the military, and politics. There is one poster of a woman.

What are the children in this classroom learning about culture? They are learning that European American culture is the norm, that people from countries outside of the United States only celebrate holidays, and that people make scientific or political advances all by themselves.

Classroom Example #2: A teacher reads *The Three Little Pigs* to the class. Through dramatic story reading, all the children huff and puff as they blow down the straw and the wood houses. Only the brick house stands firm.

With this lesson, the children learn that brick (urban) houses are best, and straw and wood houses are pretty worthless. Of course, in certain contexts, a brick house is preferable. In other climates, though, a straw or wood house is more appropriate. The story needs to be placed in context rather than giving the impression that brick houses are universally the ideal home (Wolpert, 1993).

Classroom Example #3: A sixth grade textbook describes the high level of adult illiteracy in Latin America. It describes a U.S. supported literacy program to help Latin American governments address the problem. The text does not mention that before the conquest, the Mayans in Latin America had vast libraries with volumes of advanced historical and scientific documents; nor does it discuss the profound worldwide influence of contemporary Latin American literature. In addition, the book does not mention the current high levels of adult illiteracy in the United States or the fact that certain groups in the United States, such as women and African Americans, have historically been denied the right to literacy.

Here children learn that people in other countries are "behind" the United States in their development. They are not learning about the richness of the region's literary history. They do not learn that illiteracy is the result of social or governmental policies, not the ignorance or "backwardness" of a country's population.

How long will it take to implement a multicultural curriculum?

Substantive change will probably take one to five years, but it is worth the effort! (Suzuki, 1984; York, 1991). Investing a little time—giving priority to human relations over activities covered—is important for a successful multicultural education program. As we move towards a fully enriched curriculum (using Banks'

level 4 as a goal), we can make incremental changes in cultural awareness and sensitivity. For example, we can take the time to learn to pronounce our students' full names correctly instead of relying on shorter, simpler "American" nicknames, "affirming who students are rather than who we may want them to become" (Nieto, 1992). This also demonstrates our respect for their families that gave them these names.

Won't multicultural education simply divide the school along racial and ethnic lines?

As Banks (1993) points out, "multicultural education is designed to help unify a deeply divided nation rather than to divide a highly cohesive one." Multicultural education may bring problems to the surface, giving the appearance of creating conflict. But if a school's entire staff and faculty are committed to working through that conflict, then unity based on new, more equitable relationships can be achieved. (See *Freedom's Plow* (Perry and Frazer, 1993) for teachers' descriptions of their schools' conflicts in the process of transformation.)

In *Roots and Wings* (York, 1993) and *White Teacher* (Paley, 1992) the authors describe the importance of talking openly about differences rather than ignoring them. York points out that, "phrases such as 'We are all the same' and 'You are just like me' deny the differences between people...they very subtly use European American values as the norm—the point of reference" (York, 1993).

Conflicting descriptions of history can become a valuable part of the learning process. A junior high history teacher in San Diego begins one lesson by discussing Pancho Villa, who is a hero of her Mexican American students. She tells them that, in her schooling, Villa was depicted as "a bad guy, a bandit" (Willis 1993). The history lesson becomes richer as students examine these different perspectives.

How can I know about all cultures?

You need not become an expert on all cultures represented in your school, but there are many ways you can learn about them. Talk to the students, their families, and other teachers. Explain that you want to learn more about their culture so that you can have the best possible communication with them. Visit community centers and houses of worship. Read fiction and poetry from these cultures.

When approaching students and their families, keep two points in mind: (1) Culture is not uniform; within a country it varies by region, class, religion, and many other variables. Just imagine if someone asked you to teach them all about the culture of the United States. You could tell them about your own family's traditions, which would shed some light on U.S. culture. (2) Some students, especially adolescents, may not want to be singled out as the in-house experts on their cultures and nationalities.

Multicultural Education in the School Environment

Multicultural education encompasses all aspects of school life. The values of multicultural education must be modeled throughout the school environment. In a school, there may be posters in the hallway that celebrate diverse cultures, but a disproportionate number of language minority children are suspended each week. There might be welcome signs in multiple languages, but school policy does not encourage children to maintain their native language. We must look below the surface to see how the whole school environment impacts students.

> We need to consider the role that schools and society in general have in creating low self-esteem in children. That is, students do not simply develop poor self-concepts out of the blue. Rather, they are the result of policies and practices of schools and society that respect and affirm some groups while devaluing and rejecting others. (Nieto, 1992)

The following categories can be reviewed as your school focuses on developing its multicultural curriculum. Although all aspects are integral to a successful program, it is often more manageable for a school to concentrate on one or two areas at a time. Each category includes only a few indicators. Rather than provide a fully prescribed list, we encourage you to brainstorm with fellow staff members to decide which additional factors should be considered.

Language

- What is the official policy regarding native language use and development?
- What is the prevailing attitude towards students' native languages? (This includes non-standard English.)
- Are students provided native language instruction in the core subjects so that they learn the same grade-appropriate concepts as their native English speaking peers and develop their native language proficiency while they become proficient in English?

Discipline

- Is a higher percentage of language minority students suspended or kept after school as compared to the overall school population?

Community

- How does the community perceive the school? What kind of outreach programs are there to help determine these perceptions?
- Does the curriculum connect to issues in the local community?

Assessment and Testing

- Are the assessment tools culturally and linguistically sensitive and unbiased?
- Are various methods of assessment used, such as performance based and portfolio evaluation?

Staffing (administrative, instructional, counseling, and support)

- Does the school staff reflect the cultural diversity of the student population?
- Are there staff members who can speak the native languages of the students and their families?
- Are women and people of color equitably represented in administrative positions?

Families

- How much does the staff know about the children's lives outside of school? Do they ever visit the families' homes?
- When do families receive a call from school staff? Only when there is a problem? Are there programs to involve families in school activities?

Curriculum

- Does cultural pluralism permeate the curriculum or is it the same old curriculum with a sprinkling of ethnic holidays and heroes?
- Is the curriculum rigorous and challenging to all students? Are there high academic expectations for all students?
- Does the curriculum portray culture not as a static identity but as a dynamic characteristic which is shaped by social, political, and economic conditions?
- Does the curriculum include people of various cultural and class backgrounds throughout—not just as a side bar, separate bulletin board, or special afternoon activity?
- Does the curriculum help students learn to understand experiences and perspectives other than their own (e.g., through role play, pen pals, interior monologues, dialogue poems, autobiographies, or other activities)?

Instructional Materials and School Library

- Do the textbooks and literature reflect the cultures of the students in the school?
- How are women portrayed in the textbooks?
- How are the students' native countries portrayed in the textbooks and literature?
- Does the library have contemporary music available from various parts of the United States and the world?
- Who selects the textbooks?

Classroom Practice

- Are cooperative learning and whole language methods used?
- Is there equitable participation in classroom discussions?
- Does the question and answer practice encourage or discourage participation by female and minority students?
- Does the classroom model a democratic and equitable environment as closely as possible? Is it collective or hierarchical?

Tracking or Sorting

- Are students separated within a grade level based on supposed differences in ability? For example, are students separated into different reading groups at the elementary level? Are students pulled out for talented and gifted classes? Are there different levels of secondary English or History?
- Is a disproportionate number of minority students placed in vocational or technical classes?
- What percentage of young women is in the higher level math and sciences classes in relation to the percentage of young men?

Conclusion

In summary, multicultural education strives for equity regardless of race, gender, culture, or national origin. Students' lives are shaped by both school and society. So, in order to be successful, multicultural education encompasses both the effort to create more equitable schools and the involvement of teachers and students in the creation of a more equitable society. As educator, Bill Bigelow (1993) states, "[students] are given the opportunity to flex their utopian imaginations, and further, the opportunity to try to make their dreams real."

SAMPLE METHODS AND LESSONS

What is a multicultural classroom? First and foremost it is a classroom characterized by an ethos of caring and equity. The pedagogy supports active participation through role plays, simulations, and hands-on activities. Students learn, through their own experiences, that people's actions make a difference (Bigelow, 1993).

A multicultural curriculum should help children discover their connection to a broader humanity—breaking down the invisibility of working people, women, and people of color. It should help students to identify with a much more profound sense of "we." The traditional European American centered curriculum excludes not only people of color, but also the majority of white people. The stories feature white (male) leaders—usually military, political, or economic. Students learn that isolated, independent individuals make history. A multicultural curriculum seeks not only to include other cultures but also to tell the more complete story of our *social* history. It acknowledges the value of the lives of common people (Bigelow, 1993).

The following are examples of techniques that teachers have used in their classrooms to make their lessons multicultural.

Notes

LESSON ONE

Pictures, Pictures, Pictures.

(Grades K-3, can be adapted to any grade.)

The director of Washington-Beech Community Preschool in Boston, MA, Ellen Wolpert, has developed an extensive picture collection that helps to integrate a multicultural approach across the curriculum.

The pictures show culturally diverse people throughout the United States and the world. Teachers can use these images throughout the week for math, social studies, and language arts. These diverse images of people—a woman carrying groceries on her head in Brooklyn, a man vacuuming the house, a factory worker reading a book during his lunch break, or a parent testifying with a translator at a school board hearing—represent a significant shift from the norm as it is defined by the mass media. They are not only more inclusive, but also more accurate in their representation of our multicultural country.

The following is a brief description of how to develop and use your own picture collection.

1. **Collect pictures that challenge the biases and stereotypes that children are subjected to. Some of the categories may be:**

   - Economic
   - Physical ability
   - Family
   - Race
   - Gender
   - Nationality
   - Cultures
   - Age

Within each of these categories, consider the stereotypes children are most typically exposed to and look for images which emphasize all cultures' humanity. For example, children are currently exposed to stereotypical images of Arabs which impact their attitudes about the Middle East and toward Arab Americans. To address this, include pictures in your collection of Arabs in all walks of life—with family members, shopping, worshiping, and at work.

The elderly is the fastest growing population in this country, yet our stereotypes of people in their senior years have not changed. Counter our limited assumptions about old age with images of elderly people of all nationalities actively engaged with life.

Most literature refers to Native Americans in the past tense. Counter this with images of contemporary Native Americans from the United States and Latin America in all walks of life. Within any of these categories, include people engaged in daily routines such as work (in and outside of the home), at play, and learning. Show their transportation, housing,

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art, and health care. Include people from various parts of the United States—rural and urban, south and north, small towns and big cities.

Include in every collection images of students, their families, and the school staff. This tells children that they and their families are an integral part of the school's instructional base. It also keeps children's attention. Most importantly, it demonstrates that students and teachers are part of the diversity, not outside of it (Wolpert, 1993).

2. **Mount the images on mat board and cover with clear contact paper. Use them in games based on familiar formats, including match games, sorting, classifying, counting, dominoes, puzzles, and so on. Here are some ideas for using these pictures in exercises across the curriculum.**

Math: Have students create addition, multiplication, division, or subtraction problems using the numbers of people in the pictures. For example, select two pictures, one with three people and another with six people, for a total of nine people. Students must find cards with the correct number of people to create their own math problems and solutions.

Problem Solving: One of the goals of multicultural education is to show that culture is not a collection of "quaint customs" but actually a system of strategies for living. To teach this, have students look to the images for solutions to challenges in their own lives. For example, when students study transportation, have them look at pictures of how people from many parts of the world carry children, food, firewood, and other necessities. Then give them a problem to solve, such as how to carry a baby doll and some groceries from the class store to the class house. Ask them to study the pictures of people from other countries and other parts of the United States for ideas. Some children may choose to strap the baby doll around their back with a scarf. Others may try to balance the groceries on their head so that their hands will be free to carry the baby, others may put everything into a basket on wheels. Through this lesson, students learn skills of observation, analysis, and problem solving while also gaining a respect for other cultures as sources for information and strategies for their own lives.

Language and Communication: Select a group of pictures that can be paired by themes (e.g., pictures of painted Ukrainian eggs, Navajo rugs, paintings from the Harlem Renaissance, or Sunday Easter hats). Tape the pictures onto the backs of students, so that they cannot see their own picture. Then have them walk around the room and describe the images they see to each other until they have found their pair. Through this exercise, students learn keen observation, descriptive language, and com-

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munication skills and have opportunities to dialogue with students in the class whom they may not normally interact with.

The examples provided were of art work, but this works equally well with houses, families, or any other theme that you are studying at the time. This is a successful activity for K-12—or even for staff development ice breakers.

Match: Spread dozens of cards on the table. Leave a replacement pile in the middle and one card in the match pile. Students must place cards from the pile in front of them onto the match pile. They must be able to find a common feature (e.g., both have vehicles, both have people who look worried, both have people cooking), although these may be in very different conditions.

(Lessons provided by Ellen Wolpert, Director, Washington-Beech Community Preschool, Boston, MA.)

Notes

LESSON TWO

Hold Fast to Dreams

(Grades 3-12)

Linguistically diverse students often face special difficulties in their daily lives. This can easily lead to frustration. Teachers need to find ways to keep students hopeful. The poem "Dreams," by African American poet, Langston Hughes (1960), can be used as a catalyst for a writing exercise that encourages students to explore their hopes and aspirations.

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow

(Reprinted with permission,
Alfred Knopf, New York.)

Read the poem aloud to students. Ask them to draw or write about their own dreams and how they hold on to them. Share their work. By sharing their dreams, students who are feeling less optimistic can be inspired by the dreams of others. By talking about "how they hold on to them," students learn strategies to hold on to their own dreams.

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LESSON THREE

My Life Is History
(Grades 6-12)

Traditional textbooks can make students (and teachers) feel pretty small compared to the heroes that "made history." As teachers and as linguistically diverse students, we are pushed to the margins of the textbooks. Multicultural education seeks to present a larger and more social history of this country. Multicultural texts bring out the stories of women, working people, and people of color who have traditionally been ignored. (The Background section of the resource guide in this monograph provides good sources for multicultural histories of the United States.)

The ideal place to start writing these new histories is with ourselves. The goal of this lesson is assert the connections that we all have to history. It allows us to examine the role that we play in history and to see how history can help us gain insight into our lives today and ideas for the future.

1. **Read aloud an excerpt from *Childtimes*, by children's author, Eloise Greenfield.**

> People...are affected...by big things and small things. A war, an invention such as radio or television, a birthday party, a kiss. All of these experiences help to shape people, and they in turn, help to shape the present and the future... (Greenfield and Little, 1979)

Share stories of how events in history have dramatically impacted your own life. A teacher in Washington, DC, shared the following examples with her English as a second language (ESL) class: (a) during the 1968 racial riots in Detroit, she and her family were among the few non-African Americans that she knew that stayed. Her old friends moved to the suburbs while she made new friends and learned among a community from which she had been previously isolated; (b) the invention of word processors has opened up a world of writing that she would never have pursued by hand; (c) the economic crisis in Latin America forced her husband to leave Colombia. Because of this, she met him in Washington, DC, got married, and had a child.

Have students think of ways in which historic events or developments have impacted their lives. After a few have shared their stories, ask the whole class to write (draft without concern for spelling or grammar at this point) on the topic. In the class mentioned above, one student wrote about how her family had to stay in the house for weeks during the U.S. invasion

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of Panama; a number of students from Ethiopia wrote about how the war affected their lives, and one wrote about how her role as a woman has shifted now that she lives in the new cultural environment of the United States.

2. **Timelines: By creating personal timelines, students can see how their own lives and the lives of their classmates are tied to history.**

Begin by having students phrase in their own words the quote, "An unexamined life is not worth living." Explain that the class will study the history of the community and country that we live in—beginning with the lives of the students in the class.

The teacher should prepare in advance a timeline of her own life to share with the students. Highlight dates that you know will trigger ideas for students, (e.g., when you met your best friend, first day of school, first day at work, times you have travelled, the gain or loss (birth or death) of a family member, when you learned a second language, and so on).

Have students begin to develop their own timelines. Students can expand the timelines by interviewing family members to collect dates that go back a couple of generations. When did parents or grandparents get married, come to the United States, or other highlights in their lives? Again, model first with your own timeline so that students can get ideas about the kind of information they might solicit from their relatives.

Combine the student and teacher timelines into a collective class timeline. This can be illustrated with drawings or bar graphs. Add key historical events to the personal or collective timelines so that students can see the relationship between their lives and history.

3. **Questions for History**

Discuss the following statement by noted historian, Howard Zinn,

> I started studying history with one view in mind: to look for answers to the issues and problems I saw in the world about me. By the time I went to college I had worked in a shipyard, had been in the Air Force, had been in a war. I came to history asking questions about war and peace, about wealth and poverty, about racial division.
>
> Sure, there's a certain interest in inspecting the past and it can be fun, sort of like a detective story. I can make an argument for knowledge for its own sake as something that can add to your life. But while that's good, it is small in relation to the very large objective of trying to understand and do something about the issues that face us in the world today. (Zinn, 1991)

Notes

Teachers can share some questions about history that they have based on their own life experiences. For example, a teacher shared how she and her husband both work, but when they go home in the evening it is expected that she should take care of the baby. So her question for history is: Why do women have to do more work than men?

Ask students to look at their own lives—what problems do you have? Ask history—where does this problem come from? Be prepared for some pretty profound questions. Use these to shape your teaching of history. For example, the following are a few of the questions asked in a class with students from Ethiopia, El Salvador, the Philippines, and Viet Nam:

- Why is there so much discrimination?
- Why do we have fights between different countries and why do we fight our own people?
- Why do women still get raped? (a boy asked this question)
- Why are so many people poor? Why do some people have more money than others?
- Why do people make so many bad comments about Africa? So many people tell me—if you come from Africa—did you live like an animal in the jungle?
- Why did racism start? When did it start? (We found this to be a burning question and concern for ESL students. Studies of the 1600s and 1700s when racism was institutionalized (Zinn, 1981; Bennet, 1992) help to address a lot of the students' questions.)

This personal connection should be made not just at the beginning but throughout your study of history. This helps students to understand the themes and concepts in terms of their own experiences. Students also learn about each others' strengths and cultures.

Prior to their study of the Civil Rights Movement, a teacher asked students to write about a time that they had stood up for what they knew was right. "In school I was punished once. I was made to stand in a corner on one foot," wrote a student from Laos. "After a while I put my other foot down and told the teacher that it was enough." The student will be able to connect her experience to those of the students who participated in Freedom Summer in Mississippi. The other students have learned about one student's experience of life in Laos. The same student may have been uncomfortable making a class presentation about life in Laos, but within the context of the history curriculum, profound excerpts will be shared.

(Lesson provided by Andrea Vincent, ESL teacher, Washington, DC.)

Notes

LESSON FOUR

Reading the Media

(Grades 6-12)

An important skill in multicultural education is the ability to read critically for biases in textbooks and the media. The local paper often provides ample material for students to hone their critical reading skills.

For example, an ESL teacher in Philadelphia brought an advertisement from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* for her students to critique. The ad said, "Come to Philadelphia and Celebrate New Year's Every Month of the Year." It portrayed the cultural activities of Philadelphia's many ethnic groups as a tourist attraction, and listed Chinese New Year, Cambodian New Year, and so on. The teacher posted the ad on the chalkboard and asked her students for comments.

The Cambodian students noticed that the Cambodian New Year was listed in the wrong month. The teacher asked them to probe deeper—what else did this ad make them think about? One student commented that if the newspaper had Cambodians on its staff, the incorrect date might have been avoided. Others noted that the paper rarely included news about the political situation in their home countries that they, as readers and residents of Philadelphia, would find important. "Why," they asked, "was the paper using our culture as an advertisement when the staff obviously does not even know anything about us?"

As a class project, the students wrote letters to the paper complaining about the trivilization of their culture. In addition to learning to read the media for bias, students learned about each other's cultures.

(Lesson provided by Debbie Wei, ESL Teacher, Philadelphia Public Schools, PA.)

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Curriculum Guides

Banks, J., Cortes, C., Gay, G., Garcia, R., and Ochoa, A. (1991). *Curriculum guidelines for multicultural education*. Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

Curriculum guidelines and a multicultural education program checklist.

* Belli, G. et al. (1992). *Rediscovering America*. Washington, DC: NECA.

Excellent readings and lessons for providing a multicultural history of the Americas. Includes two dialogue poems which can be used to teach about multiple perspectives on many issues.

Bruchac, J., and Caduto, M. J. (1989). *Keepers of the earth: Native American stories and environmental activities for children*. Colorado: Fulcrum.

Native American stories are linked to classroom lessons on science and the environment.

* Derman-Sparks, L. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children*. National Association of Education for Young Children.

Chapters include: Learning about Racial Differences and Similarities; Learning About Gender Identity; Activism; Holiday Activities; Working With Parents; and *Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Sexism and Racism.*

* Peterson, B. et al. (1992). *Rethinking Columbus*. Wisconsin: Rethinking Schools.

Lessons, essays, short stories, interviews, and poetry critique the traditional versions of the encounter and offer teachers creative approaches for engaging young people in an evaluation of the hidden assumptions within the discovery myth.

* Schniedewind, N., and Davidson, E. (1983). *Open minds to equality*. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

Lessons address building trust, communication, and cooperation; stereotypes; the impact of discrimination; and creating change.

* _____ . (1983). *Cooperative learning/cooperative lives*. Iowa: Brown.

More than 75 excellent interdisciplinary activities that are easily integrated into the upper elementary and middle school curriculum for language arts, math, social studies, art, and science.

York, S. (1991). *Roots and wings: Affirming culture in early childhood programs*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

A wonderful collection of hands-on activities for children that shape respectful attitudes toward cultural differences. Also includes recommendations for staff training and parent involvement.

Literature Reviews

Harris, V. (Ed.). (1992). *Teaching multicultural literature in grades K-8*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.
An opening chapter on the politics of children's literature is followed by critical reviews of children's literature featuring Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, people of the Caribbean, and Asian Pacific Americans.

Reflections on Teaching and School Reform

California State Department of Education. (Ed.). (1986). *Beyond language: Social and cultural factors in schooling language minority students*. Los Angeles: California State University Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assistance Center.

Cummins, J. (1986). "Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention." *Harvard Educational Review*, 56, 18-36.

Gould, S. et al. (1991). *Strategic planning for multicultural education*. Chicago: The Joyce Foundation.
Guidelines for schools trying to develop their own model for multicultural education. Includes internal assessments for schools with linguistically diverse populations.

Langer, J. A. (Ed.). (1987). *Language, literacy and culture: Issues of society and schooling*. New Jersey: Ablex.

Murray, D. (Ed.). (1992). *Diversity as resource: Redefining cultural literacy*. Virginia: TESOL.
Examines specific literacies and uses of language among specific groups such as Mexican Americans, Khmer, and African Americans. Offers classroom strategies to realize the potential of linguistically and culturally diverse learners.

Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. New York: Longman.
Explores the meaning, necessity, and benefits of multicultural education for students from all backgrounds. Nieto explains in clear, accessible language how personal, social, political, cultural, and educational factors interact to affect the success or failure of students in our schools, and offers a research-based rationale for multicultural education.

Olsen, L., and Mullen, N. (1990). *Embracing diversity: Teachers' voices from California classrooms*. California: California Tomorrow.
Teachers talk about how they are creating classrooms which allow them and their students to transcend barriers of language, cultural differences, and national background. Focus on curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher education.

Paley, V. G. (1989). *White teacher.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

A review in the Phi Delta Kappan says: "A wonderful, useful book—short, warm and to the point. Using entertaining, well-chosen incidents from her own teaching experience, Paley examines a question that concerns teachers at all levels: How do I use my own behavior as a teacher to help my students learn to deal constructively with racial and social differences?"

* Perry, T., and Fraser, J. (Eds.). (1993). *Freedom's plow: Teaching in a multicultural classroom.* New York: Routledge.

The voices and experiences of first grade to college level teachers who are actively engaged in multicultural teaching efforts.

* Sleeter, C. (Ed.). (1991). *Empowerment through multicultural education.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

The strategies section includes a chapter on the empowerment of language minority students.

Walsh, C. (Ed.). (1991). *Literacy as praxis: Culture, language and pedagogy.* New Jersey: Ablex.

Examines the relationship between literacy and empowerment for language minority students. Includes an excellent chapter on a fifth-grade bilingual classroom and two chapters on family literacy programs.

Background Reading

Amott, T. L., and Matthaei, J. (1991). *Race, gender and work: A multicultural economic history of women in the United States.* Boston: South End Press.

Bennet, L. (1992). *The shaping of black America: The struggles and triumphs of African-Americans, 1619 to the 1990s.* New York: Penguin Books.

What forces transformed Africans into African Americans? How did they sustain themselves during centuries of captivity and oppression? In what way did their presence shape the attitudes—and fortunes—of white America? How did black people become a nation within a nation? And what are the prospects for that nation in the 1990s?

Takaki, R. (1993). *A different mirror: A history of multicultural America.* Boston: Little, Brown, and Co.

A lively account filled with the stories and voices of people previously left out of the historical canon.

* Zinn, H. (1980). *A people's history of the United States.* New York: Harper Collins.

The lives and facts that are rarely included in textbooks. An indispensable teacher resource.

Journals

Multicultural Education

Published quarterly by National Association of Multicultural Education ($40/year). Contact: Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard, Suite 275, San Francisco, CA 94118; 415/750-9978.

*** *Rethinking Schools***

1001 E. Keefe Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53212. ($12.50/year individuals, $25 organizations.)

The Spring 1993 issue on Parent Involvement programs also featured a bibliography of children's literature on the elderly—a group often ignored in discussions of multicultural education. The bibliography includes titles in Spanish.

Teaching Tolerance

400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104. (Free subscription for teachers.)

This is a 64-page, full color magazine published by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Free for educators. The Fall 1992 issue had an excellent article titled, "The Peacekeepers: Students Use Mediation Skills to Resolve Conflicts," that described programs nationwide and provided a detailed resource list.

Sources

California Tomorrow
Fort Mason Center
Building B
San Francisco, CA 94123

Research, advocacy, and technical support for California schools on education in a multicultural and multiracial society. Write for a list of their excellent publications, including Embracing Diversity *(see Resources section).*

Multicultural Publishers Exchange
Highsmith Co.
W5527 Highway 106
PO Box 800
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538-0800
800/558-2110

Catalogue of books by and about people of color.

Teaching for Change Catalogue
c/o NECA
1118 22nd Street, NW
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202-429-0137

** The starred items in the resource section are among the many resources and publications listed in this catalogue. Write or call for a free copy.*

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6. **Re-Thinking the Education of Teachers of Language Minority Children: Developing Reflective Teachers for Changing Schools.** Robert Milk, Carmen Mercado & Alexander Sapiens, 1992.
5. **Programs for Secondary LEP Students: A California Study.** Catherine Minicucci & Laurie Olsen, 1992.
4. **Teaching and Testing Achievement: The Role of Language Development.** Muriel Saville-Troike, 1991.
3. **Bilingual Education: A Focus on Current Research.** Stephen D. Krashen, 1991.
2. **Early Childhood Programs for Language Minority Children.** Helen Nissani, 1990.
1. **Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: A Research Perspective.** Kenji Hakuta, 1990.

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Program Information Guide Series—1990-93

15. **Reforming Mathematics Instruction for ESL Literacy Students.** Keith Buchanan & Mary Helman, 1993.
14. **Applying Elements of Effective Secondary Schooling for Language Minority Students: A Tool for Reflection and Stimulus to Change.** Tamara Lucas, 1993.
13. **The Literacy Club: A Cross-age Tutoring/Paired Reading Project.** Barbara Cook & Carole Urzua, 1993.
12. **Cooperative Learning in the Secondary School: Maximizing Language Acquisition, Academic Achievement, and Social Development.** Dan D. Holt, Barbara Chips & Diane Wallace, 1992.
11. **Teaching Science to English Learners, Grades 4-8.** Ann K. Fathman, Mary Ellen Quinn & Carolyn Kessler, 1992.
10. **Writer's Workshop and Children Acquiring English as a Non-Native Language.** Katharine Davies Samway, 1992.
9. **Performance and Portfolio Assessment for Language Minority Students.** Lorraine Valdez Pierce & J. Michael O'Mally, 1992.
8. **The Newcomer Program: Helping Immigrant Students Succeed in U.S. Schools.** Monica Friedlander, 1991.
7. **Integrating Language and Content Instruction: Strategies and Techniques.** Deborah J. Short. 1991.
6. **Fostering Home-School Cooperation: Involving Language Minority Families as Partners in Education.** Emma Violand-Sánchez, Christine P. Sutton & Herbert W. Ware, 1991.
5. **School Based Management: What Bilingual and ESL Program Directors Should Know.** Denise McKeon & Lynn Malarz, 1991.
4. **Using Interpreters and Translators to Meet the Needs of Handicapped Language Minority Students and Their Families.** Sandra H. Fradd & Diane K. Wilen, 1990.
3. **Informal Assessment in Evaluation of Educational Programs: Implications for Bilingual Education Programs.** Cecilia Navarrete et al., 1990.
2. **Integrating Learning Styles and Skills in the ESL Classrooms: An Approach to Lesson Planning.** Emma Violand Hainer et al., 1990.
1. **Helping Language Minority Students After They Exit from Bilingual/ESL Programs: A Handbook for Teachers.** Else V. Hamayan & Ron Perlman, 1990.

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About the Author

Deborah Menkart is the director of the Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA) and the Books Project. NECA, a nonprofit organization, produces and distributes materials on critical teaching and multicultural education. NECA copublished the popular publication, *Rethinking Columbus*, and sponsored the Rethinking Columbus/Rethinking Our Classrooms workshops. The Books Project is a federally funded teacher training project on the teaching of reading and writing to linguistically diverse students. Menkart is co-editor of the curriculum series, *Caribbean Connections*, which includes titles on Haiti, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. She is currently co-editing a guide for elementary and secondary schools titled *Beyond Multiculturalism: Roots of Racism/Stories of Resistance*.

Multicultural Education: Strategies for Linguistically Diverse Schools and Classrooms

Multicultural Education: Strategies for Linguistically Diverse Schools and Classrooms provides an overview of multicultural education, its development, and its implications for the education of linguistically diverse students. Menkart outlines ways that teachers can integrate ethnic content into their curricula to ensure cultural, social, gender, and racial equity in the classroom. Using the framework of Banks' four levels of integration of ethnic content into curriculum, Menkart focuses on strategies for transforming education and building students' decision making skills and social awareness.

The publication includes several sample lesson plans that illustrate ways that teachers can incorporate multicultural content into their curriculum to engage and empower all students. It also includes an extensive resource listing of publications and organizations that focus on multicultural education.

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